

CARPOPHAGA *ÆNEA*, Tick.

Carpophaga ænea, Tick.; Tweeddd. *t. c.* p. 623; Wardlaw Ramsay, *t. c.* p. 659.

Observed by Mr. Everett at Puerto Princesa.

PTILOPUS MELANOCEPHALUS (Forst.).

Ptilopus melanocephalus (Forst.); Tweeddd. *t. c.* p. 951; Wardlaw Ramsay, *t. c.* p. 659.

New to Palawan, but known from South Mindanao, Basilan, and the Sulu Islands.

MEGAPODIUS CUMINGI, Dillw.

Megapodius cumingi, Dillw.; Tweeddd. *t. c.* p. 624.

Two specimens. See Lord Tweeddale's remarks, *l. c.*

ÆGIALITIS PERONI (Temm.).

Ægialitis peronii (Temm.); Tweeddd. *t. c.* p. 344; Wardlaw Ramsay, *t. c.* p. 659.

This species was found by Mr. Everett in Leyte and Bohol. Is this the *Ægialitis cantianus* of Lord Tweeddale (P. Z. S. 1878, p. 624) ?

ÆGIALITIS GEOFFROYI, Wagl.

Eudromias geoffroyi, Tweeddd. *t. c.* pp. 344, 624.

Found by Mr. Everett at Puerta Princesa.

XXXV.—*Remarks on the Eighth and Ninth Volumes of the 'Catalogue of the Birds in the British Museum.'* By T. SALVADORI, C.M.Z.S, For. Memb. B.O.U.

THE eighth and ninth volumes of the 'Catalogue of the Birds in the British Museum' have been prepared by Mr. Gadow. It is not my intention to write a complete critical review of them, but only to proffer some remarks especially on those points in which I am concerned, or which are well known to me, as relating mostly to Papuan species.

The eighth volume contains the Paridæ, Laniidæ, and Certhiomorphæ.

In the Introduction (p. viii) Mr. Gadow mentions the names of eight "gentlemen, who by the loan of specimens have

considerably facilitated the completion of the volume." Certainly it would have been too great an honour for me to have had my name united with theirs; but still I do not understand why Mr. Gadow should have omitted it entirely, as, besides the type of *Lanius antinorii*, I sent for inspection to the British Museum a *complete set* of all the Pachycephaline birds belonging to Beccari's and D'Albertis's Papuan collections, every specimen being properly named. Several of them were *type* specimens, and I suppose that Mr. Gadow must have derived some benefit from their examination.

Coming now to some particular points, we find that *Malacotus hypopyrrhus*, Hartl., has been united with *Laniarius poliocephalus* (p. 156). I know that several ornithologists agree in this; but according to my idea the two birds are distinct. Heuglin has already remarked (Orn. N.O.-Afr. p. 466) that among many specimens collected by him in North-east Africa none had the orange tint on the breast, which is peculiar to *L. hypopyrrhus*. I may add that Antinori's first African collection (Cat. p. 54) contained five specimens from Djur, three males and two females, and none had the orange breast like the two specimens which he has lately sent from Shoa. Leaving that question, and admitting for a moment that *L. hypopyrrhus* (Hartl.) = *L. poliocephalus*, it seems very curious to find that while *L. hypopyrrhus* was described in 1844, Mr. Gadow should use now (p. 155) the same name for another species, viz. *Vanga cruenta*, Less. (nec *Lanius cruentus*, H. et E.)! I therefore propose for Lesson's species the name of LANIARIUS LESSONI.

I have been much astonished at the curious mixture of *Pachycephala macrorhyncha*, Strickl., and *P. obiensis*, Salvad., with *P. melanura*, Gould, in Mr. Gadow's volume (p. 185). I believe that Mr. Sharpe, in his Report of the 'Alert,' is about to settle those birds in their proper places again. Mr. Gadow, notwithstanding Canon Tristram's remarks and my acquiescence with them, unites *P. christophori*, Tristr., with *P. astrolabi*!*

* In the course of some remarks made before the Zoological Society of London, Canon Tristram has, I believe, already objected to this and other identifications made by Mr. Gadow.

The insular forms *P. jobiensis* and *P. miosnomensis* are united with *P. griseiceps* (p. 215), although sufficiently distinct. I must also protest against calling the *Muscitrea cyanea*, Hume (p. 224), *P. cyanea*, there being already a *Pachycephala cyanea* of mine, especially as Mr. Gadow could have chosen for Mr. Hume's species one of the two other names belonging to it. I do not see much use in having a figure (pl. ix.) of *Pachycephala poliosoma*, as this species has already been figured in the 'Birds of New Guinea,' pt. xiii. Mr. Gadow could have bestowed one of his plates on a species not yet figured.

In concluding my remarks on Mr. Gadow's eighth volume of the Catalogue, I may say that I have failed to find in it any mention of the following species:—

1st. *Lanius dorsalis*, Cab. Journ. f. Orn. 1878, pp. 205, 225, which most likely is the same as my *Lanius antinorii*, and which has already been mentioned several times (Ibis, 1879, pp. 104, 354; Journ. f. Orn. 1879, p. 213; Oust. Note s. l. Ois. Comalis, p. 10, 1882).

2nd. *Lanius gubernator*, Hartl. Orn. Centralbl. 1882, p. 91; id. Journ. f. Orn. 1882, pp. 323, 350, Taf. i. f. 2.

3rd. *Lanius pyrrhostictus*, Holub et Pelz. Beitr. Orn. Sud-afr. p. 97, Taf. ii. (1882); Pelz. Verh. zool.-bot. Gesellsch. Wien, 1882, p. 505; Hartl. Abh. naturw. Ver. Brem. 1882, p. 224.

The last is, most likely, only the female of *Lanius collaris*.

These omissions (and perhaps there may be others which now escape me) show clearly that Mr. Gadow is not very well acquainted with ornithological literature.

The second volume by Mr. Gadow contains the Nectariniidæ and the Meliphagidæ; but I am sorry to say that in treating of the former he has only succeeded in spoiling the good work done by Capt. Shelley in his excellent Monograph of that family, and that as regards the Meliphagidæ, Mr. Gadow has done as much as he could to reduce them to a very sad state of confusion, having destroyed the little order I tried to introduce among them while treating in my

'Ornitologia' of more than a hundred species—that is to say, nearly half the known ones.

As regards the Nectariniidæ, Mr. Gadow recognizes only as races *Nectarinia bocagei*, *N. cupreonitens*, *Æthopyga cara*, *Æ. nicobarica*, and *Æ. horsfieldi*; and perhaps he may have some apparent reason, although to my mind several of these are entitled to specific rank as much as many others recognized as distinct by Mr. Gadow. According to my idea the genus *Eudrepanis*, if not *Urodrepanis*, ought to be kept separate from *Æthopyga*. Under *Cinnyris venusta* Mr. Gadow unites four races, which Capt. Shelley separates as species. *C. osiris*, *C. erythroceria*, *C. bifasciata*, and *C. microrhyncha* are united with *C. mariguensis*; *C. andamanica* with *C. flammixillaris*; *C. frenata* with *C. jugularis*; *C. acik* with *C. senegalensis*; *C. kirki* with *C. amethystina*; *Anthothreptes hypodila* and *A. zambesiana* with *A. collaris*; and *A. celebensis*, *A. rhodolæma*, and *A. chlorogaster* with *A. malaccensis*!

But Mr. Gadow has made still greater havoc in the *Hermotimia* group. While twelve species (leaving out *H. grayi*) and three subspecies have been admitted by Captain Shelley, who ought to know something about them, Mr. Gadow has reduced them to three only! Even allowing that *H. morotensis* may not be sufficiently distinct from *H. auriceps*, *H. salvadorii* from *H. nigriscapularis*, and *H. aspasioides*, *cornelia*, *corinna*, *mysorensis*, *jobiensis*, and even *maforensis* from *H. aspasia*, I should like to ask anybody who knows anything about birds if *H. auriceps* and *H. porphyrolæma*, with the metallic portion of the plumage (except the head) of a very dark steel-blue, can be united with *H. aspasia*, *H. nigriscapularis*, and *H. proserpina*, which have the metallic portion of the plumage golden green on the upper tail-coverts and rump, while the last two species are so conspicuously different from *H. aspasia*, wanting the bright golden-green scapulars, and differ *inter se* as regards the smaller wing-coverts, which are entirely bright bluish green in *H. proserpina*, and black, except a few on the angle of the wing, in *H. nigriscapularis*.

The importance of all these differences is confirmed by the

different geographical distribution of each form, and would be duly appreciated by any one who is accustomed to discriminate allied forms. But for that one must be an ornithologist. Moreover, while our author has tried to keep as different races *H. aspasia* and *H. aspasioides*, he has made a great confusion as regards their geographical distribution. The range of *H. aspasioides* is given (p. 71) as "S.E. New Guinea and New Britain," whereas it was described from *Amboyna*, and it is confined to the Amboyna or Ceram group; and among the localities of *H. aspasia* Mr. Gadow includes Amboyna, where that form has never been found. In fact *H. aspasioides* is, in the Ceram group, the Moluccan representative of the exclusively Papuan *H. aspasia*.

I must also point out that Mr. Gadow has entirely omitted *Cyrtostomus melanocephalus* (Ramsay) from the Solomon Islands, described at p. 269 of the second volume of my 'Ornitologia della Papuasie e delle Molucche,' where, besides the description, all the quotations belonging to it are to be found. This species has been omitted by Capt. Shelley in his Monograph, and so has escaped the notice of Mr. Gadow, who has not even taken the trouble of looking into that part of my work relating to the Nectariniidæ, *which he has most carefully avoided quoting*.

Passing to the Meliphagidæ, the first species we find (p. 129) is *Myzomela guentheri* from New Britain, described as new, while most certainly it is the same as my *Myzomela erythromelas*, of which there is no mention in Mr. Gadow's volume, although it was described by me in 1881 (Atti R. Ac. Sc. Tor. xvi. p. 624), mentioned in the 'Annali del Musco Civico di Genova,' xviii. p. 424, and in 'The Ibis,' 1882, p. 176, and redescribed in the third part of my 'Ornitologia,' p. 541. *M. infuscata*, Salvad., a representative form of *M. erythrocephala* in the Aru Islands, has also escaped Mr. Gadow's attention. *Myzomela adolphinæ* is regarded as a representative form of *M. erythrocephala* (p. 134), while it belongs to a different group, being much more allied to *M. boiei* and *M. chloroptera*. With *M. cruentata*, Meyer, from the Arfak Mountains, are united *M. coccinea*, Ramsay, from Duke of

York Islands, and *M. erythrina*, Ramsay, from New Ireland ; but I have examined a specimen of the last, and it is certainly distinct, as is most likely *M. coccinea*. *M. rubro-brunnea*, Meyer, and *M. rubroincta*, Salvad., are perfectly distinct from *M. simplex*, of which Mr. Gadow considers that they are only subspecies.

It is a blessing that in the Catalogue the genus *Zosterops* has been treated of by Mr. Sharpe, as otherwise who knows into what a state of confusion it would have been reduced !

In the genus *Glycyphila* Mr. Gadow includes the genera *Glycychæra* and *Stigmatops*, to which I cannot assent, and also unites *Stigmatops chloris* and *S. subocularis* with *Glycyphila ocularis*. I can find no mention of my *Stigmatops blasii* from Amboyna, described in the third part of my 'Ornithologia,' p. 543. Most likely this is the bird from Ceram mentioned quite recently by Dr. A. B. Meyer ('Ueber neue und ungenügend bekannte Vögel, Nester und Eier aus dem ostindischen Archipel,' p. 40) as *Myzomela*, n. sp.

Treating of the genus *Ptilotis*, there are many points where the opinions expressed by Mr. Gadow are at variance with the facts established by me. He divides *P. analoga* into three races, one of which, *P. flavirictus*, I still regard as specifically distinct ; the so-called southern race, with the yellow auricular feathers very short, is to be found also in the north.

With *P. albinotata*, Salvad., Mr. Gadow (p. 229) unites *P. montana*, Salvad. ; but I doubt whether he has ever seen any specimen of the two, and I shall continue to believe that they are really distinct, the former living in the low districts, and *P. montana* in the mountains.

In the genus *Ptilotis* Mr. Gadow has included a most natural group, which has been separated as *Xanthotis* ; the type of this group is *P. chrysotis* (Less.). I have seen many specimens of this bird, also from Dorey and Andai, and none had the feathers of the hind neck tipped with grey. I suspect that the specimen from Waigiou, which is described (p. 238) as most richly coloured, belongs to my *Xanthotis fusciventris*, regarded as a subspecies by Mr. Gadow, who has wrongly

translated my description of it. I said, "*corpore subtus minime rufescente . . . abdomine griseo-fusco.*" *Minime* means "*not at all*," while Mr. Gadow has translated it "*less*;" and *griseo-fusco* does not mean that the abdomen is *mottled*, but simply *brownish grey*.

Passing to the genus *Philemon*, *Ph. jobiensis* is not simply a subspecies, but a most distinct insular form, and, besides having the fore part of the crown bare, it wants completely the knob at the base of the culmen. I said, "*culmine rostri . . . minime tuberoso*;" and again *minime* means "*not at all*."

In the habitat of *Ph. moluccensis* (p. 276) I find Bouru and the Ké Islands, and two specimens from the latter locality are attributed to that species. But here there must be some mistake, as *Ph. moluccensis* only lives in Bouru, and in the Ké Islands only *Ph. plumigenis* is to be found. To this species are attributed (p. 280) the specimens from Tenimber Islands; but I am inclined to agree with Dr. Meyer, who quite recently has separated them as *Ph. timorlaoënsis* (*l. c.* p. 41). In the genus *Philemon* is included *Ph. sclateri*, which I still believe to be allied to the genera *Melidectes* and *Melirrhophetes*, and to be generically separable as *Meliarchus*.

The union of *Melipotes gymnops* in one genus with the species attributed to *Euthyrhynchus* is beyond my comprehension!

The last species included in Mr. Gadow's vol. ix. of the British Museum Catalogue is my *Ædistoma pygmæum*, relegated to the Appendix. The author's last remark is as follows:—"Count Salvadori has placed this genus between his genera *Glycychæra* and *Melilestes*. Not having seen a specimen, I have not been able to place it systematically, but it probably comes near *Glycyphila*." I can most positively state that Mr. Gadow would not have erred if he had left in peace my genus *Melilestes*, instead of splitting it into two parts, one of which, most wrongly, he has attributed to *Arachnothera*! *Melilestes novæ-guinææ*, *M. iliolophus*, *M. affinis*, and *M. poliopterus* are no *Arachnotheræ* at all, but most certainly Meliphagine birds; they have the "bill with a prominent culmen, broadened out at base . . . maxilla serrated.

Nostrils basal, situated in a large unossified groove, which is quite soft and membranous, *longitudinal*, and with a well-developed coriaceous operculum" (Gadow, *l.c.* p. 127). *Ex ore tuo te judico*. The species of the genus *Glycychæra* (abolished by Mr. Gadow), and those of *Ædistoma* and *Melilestes* (also abolished), constitute a very natural group of the Meliphagidæ, and must be accepted as proposed in my work.

Among the nine plates illustrating this volume we find one (pl. iv.) of *Ptilotis marmorata*, already figured in the 'Birds of New Guinea,' so that the figure of one not yet represented would have been more useful.

After having seen Mr. Gadow's volumes, I have come to the conclusion that the authorities of the British Museum were not well advised in entrusting him with that ornithological task. A work like the 'Catalogue of the British Museum' should be done by an experienced ornithologist, and not by an occasional one, like Mr. Gadow. I know that those authorities have been influenced by the wish expressed from different sides of having the great work accomplished in a shorter time; but the good or the best possible execution of the work should not be sacrificed to that desire. No human work is perfect, and I know that but too well, having failed more than once; but in any case the work should be assigned to a competent person. No doubt in the volumes of the Catalogue prepared by Mr. Sharpe there are also mistakes; but still one sees that they have been done by a competent person and a thorough ornithologist.

I shall conclude by expressing my opinion that it would have been much better if the volumes of the Catalogue not prepared by Mr. Sharpe had been published with his revision and under his responsibility, and I hope that this will be done in future. In this way we may expect to have, besides other advantages, the necessary uniformity in that great undertaking, the 'Catalogue of the Birds.'